

**FUTURE FISHERIES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
GRANT APPLICATION**

I. APPLICANT INFORMATION

- A. Applicant Name: Grant Grisak-Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
- B. Mailing Address: 4600 Giant Springs Road
- C. City: Great Falls State: MT Zip: 59405
- Telephone: 454-5853
- D. Contact Person: same
- Address if different from Applicant:
- City: State: Zip:
- Telephone:
- E. Landowner and/or Lessee Name
(if other than Applicant): Rocking C's Ranch
- Mailing Address: 1151 Smith River Road
- City: White Sulphur Springs State: MT Zip: 59645
- Telephone: 547-3565

II. PROJECT INFORMATION*

- A. Project Name: Riparian fence/water on Smith River and Sheep Creek
- River, stream, or lake: Smith River, Sheep Creek
- Location: Township 13N Range 4E Section 34,27
- County: Meagher

B. Purpose of Project:

The Rocking C's Ranch is located along the Smith River in Meagher County directly adjacent to Camp Baker and Smith River State Park. It is approximately 77 miles upstream from the mouth (Figure 1). The ranch is proposing to fence off 4.56 miles of riparian habitat along the Smith River (3.24 miles), Spring Creek (0.43 mile) and Camp Baker-Sheep Creek (0.89 miles) to change hay fields and parcels into grazing and hay fields. The six fields in question are the Spring Creek field, "L" field, Pond field, West Pasture field, Cruz parcel and the Camp Baker-Sheep Creek fields (Figure 7). These fields are presently used for raising hay and no livestock grazing has been allowed for nearly 20 years.

C. Brief Project Description:

The Spring Creek hay field is located on the Smith River at river mile 76.7 (T13N, R4E, S34, 27 Lat 46.85049, Lon -111.21808) (Figure 2). This field parallels the Smith River for 0.78 mile and Spring Creek for 0.43 mile. The proposed action is to convert this field from exclusive hay production to include livestock grazing. Presently there are no riparian fences in place because livestock are not allowed in the hay field. This field/pasture would require 1.21 mile of 3 strand high tensile electric fence to restrict livestock from the river and stream banks. The average setback would be 30 feet (range 10-90 feet). This pasture is located directly across the river from the Spring Creek boat camp, which is the first boat camp for floaters using the Smith River. In order to draw cattle away from this boater camp, it would be necessary to drill a well to provide off site water for livestock. One water gap would be installed in this pasture for emergency purposes.

The "L" hay field is located on the Smith River at river mile 77.5 (T13N, R4E, S34 Lat 46.84361, Lon -111.20853) (Figure 2). This field parallels the Smith River for 0.76 mile. The proposed action is to convert this field from exclusive hay production to include livestock grazing. Presently there are no riparian fences in place because livestock are not allowed in the hay field. This field/pasture would require 0.76 mile of 3 strand high tensile electric fence to restrict livestock from the river banks. The average setback would be approximately 20 feet (range 15-40 feet). One water gap would be installed at the upper and lower ends of this pasture.

The Pond hay field is located on the Smith River at river mile 79.1 (T12N, R4E, S2 Lat 46.83070, Lon -111.19433) (Figure 3). This field parallels the Smith River for 0.66 mile. The proposed action is to convert this field from exclusive hay production and equine eventing to a livestock grazing pasture. Presently there are no riparian fences in place because livestock are not allowed in the hay field. This field/pasture would require 0.66 mile of 3 strand high tensile electric fence to restrict livestock from the river banks. The average setback would be approximately 90 feet (range 30-260 feet). A livestock water system is presently in place in this field.

The West Pasture field is located directly west of the Pond hay field (Figure 3). This field parallels the Smith River for 0.36 mile. The proposed action is to convert this field from hay production to a livestock grazing pasture. Presently there are no riparian fences in place because livestock are not allowed in the hay field. This field/pasture would require 0.56 mile of 3 strand high tensile electric fence to restrict livestock from the river banks. The average setback would be 25 feet (range 20-210 feet). One water gap would be installed at the upper and lower end of this pasture.

The Cruz parcel is located 0.46 mile downstream of Camp Baker on river left and is part of a 280 acre parcel of land that the Rocking C's Ranch is in the process of acquiring (Figure 4). Upon closing, ranch would fence the parcel along the Smith River. This parcel consists of a 0.56 mile long reach of the Smith River (T12N, R4E, S11 Lat 46.81377, Lon -111.18696). There are presently no cattle on this parcel. The parcel would require 0.56 mile of 3 strand high tensile electric fence to restrict livestock from the river banks. The minimum setback would be 30 feet. The riparian fence would tie into existing boundary fences on the Rocking C's Ranch (north) and the Johnston Ranch (south). A domestic water source is present on the upland portion of the parcel so off site water would be provided for livestock there. An emergency water gap would be installed in this fence in the event of a water source failure.

The Camp Baker and Sheep Creek hay fields consist of two fields that span the lower 2 miles of Sheep Creek near Camp Baker State Park (T12N, R4E, S13, T12N, R5E, S18 Lat 46.80354, Lon -111.17392). The Camp Baker site involves two fences that span 0.52 miles of Sheep Creek near its confluence with the Smith River (Figure 5). The Upper Sheep Creek site involves two fences that span 0.47 mile of Sheep Creek upstream of the Smith River Road (T12N, R5E, S18 Lat 46.80633 Lon -111.15286) (Figure 6). These sites were selected for protection with riparian fences because there is evidence of unstable banks that are vulnerable to erosion and trampling by livestock. The fences would safeguard these sensitive sites and allow the banks to recover.

D. Length of stream or size of lake that will be treated: **4.56 miles**

Project Budget:

	length - miles	materials	labor	well	gate/water gap	Solar charger
Spring Creek pasture	1.21	\$4,855.00	\$5,302.00	\$11,633.00	\$150.00	1
L pasture	0.76	\$3,049.00	\$3,331.00		\$150.00	1
Pond pasture	0.66	\$2,649.00	\$2,895.00			1
West pasture	0.58*	\$3,062.00	\$1,577.00		\$150.00	1
Cruz parcel	0.56	\$2,246.00	\$2,454.00		\$150.00	1
Camp Baker -Sheep Creek	0.99	\$3,973.00	\$4,338.00		\$600.00	1
total	4.76*	\$19,834.00	\$19,897.00	\$11,633.00	\$1,200.00	\$2,400.00

*includes 0.2 mile of non-riparian fence

E.

Contribution by Applicant (Dollars): \$ **19,897.00** In-kind \$ **0.00**
(salaries of government employees are not considered as matching contributions)

Contribution from other Sources (Dollars): \$ **25,067.00** In-kind \$ **0.00**
(attach verification - See page 2 budget template)

Grant Request (Dollars): \$ **10,000.00 for materials and well**

FFIP Grant Request –	\$10,000.00	18.2%
Rocking C's Ranch –	\$19,897.00	36.2%
Montana FWP – Smith River Corridor Enhancement Acct	\$25,067.00	45.6%

Total Project Cost: \$ **\$54,964.00**

III. PROJECT BENEFITS*

A. What species of fish will benefit from this project?:

The project is located in the popular 60-mile long Smith River State Park and floater section. This area is highly valuable fishery for rainbow trout, brown trout and mountain whitefish.

B. How will the project protect or enhance wild fish habitat?:

At present there is no livestock grazing allowed along this section of the Smith River, Spring Creek and very limited grazing on Sheep Creek. As such, the riparian zone is in very good condition. The ranch is proposing to convert these hay fields and parcel to livestock grazing. If the riparian zones are not fenced off and protected, the riparian vegetation will become denuded by livestock grazing and trampling, the banks would likely become unstable and diminish valuable trout and whitefish habitat. At Camp Baker and the Spring Creek boat camps, livestock would be present along the river and stream banks and likely diminish the floater experience in the State Park and floater section.

C. Will the project improve fish populations and/or fishing? To what extent?:

The project would maintain and improve both fish populations and fishing. Between 3000 and 4000 anglers and floaters use this section of the Smith River each year. Anglers fish the lower reaches of Sheep Creek by walking upstream from Camp Baker State Park.

Sheep Creek is a valuable spawning tributary for rainbow trout. MFWP records show rainbow trout travel as far as 90 miles from the Missouri River to spawn in Sheep Creek and rainbow trout from the Smith River use Sheep Creek for spawning (Grisak et al. 2012). Both rainbow trout and brown trout from the Missouri River use the Smith River for spawning (Grisak 2012). In 2012, five rainbow trout with radio tags traveled as far as 19 miles up Sheep Creek to spawn (Grant Grisak, MFWP, personal observation).

D. Will the project increase public fishing opportunity for wild fish and, if so, how?:

The project area is already a highly valuable trout fishery and recreation corridor. The project is designed to maintain the high quality fish habitat at these sites. It will prevent the destruction of valuable fish habitat by restricting livestock access to the river and stream banks. One of the hay fields that would be converted to livestock grazing is the Spring Creek field which is located directly across the river from the Spring Creek Boat Camp (Figure 6). The fishing/camping experience at this site would be greatly diminished if livestock are allowed free range use of the riparian habitat and river banks. The Camp Baker-Sheep Creek pasture is located directly across the river from Camp Baker (Figure 6). The fishing/camping experience at this site would be greatly diminished if livestock are allowed free range use of the riparian habitat and river banks.

E. If the project requires maintenance, what is your time commitment to this project?:

The landowner would be responsible for all maintenance. Fence maintenance would be integrated into the existing fence maintenance program.

F. What was the cause of habitat degradation in the area of this project and how will the project correct the cause?:

The project area is in reasonably good condition now. Major land use changes are proposed for this area that would greatly diminish the riparian habitat and river/stream banks if preventative measures are not implemented. This project would safeguard the riparian habitat by restricting livestock access to the river banks.

G. What public benefits will be realized from this project?:

The project lies within the popular Smith River State Park and floating corridor. Approximately 3200 floaters used this area in 2011 (Maas 2012). Restricting livestock from the river banks would maintain the floater experience throughout the recreation corridor.

H. Will the project interfere with water or property rights of adjacent landowners? (explain):

No.

I. Will the project result in the development of commercial recreational use on the site?: (explain):

No. The project area lies within the Smith River State Park and floating corridor. A substantial amount of commercial activity occurs in this area from commercial fishing outfitters. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks offers concessions to commercial outfitters to guarantee outfitter launch dates and times. Rocking C's Ranch offers some commercial activities in the form of equestrian training and eventing. The ranch is a commercial enterprise in the sense that livestock are raised for sale.

J. Is this project associated with the reclamation of past mining activity?:

no

Each approved project sponsor must enter into a written agreement with the Department specifying terms and duration of the project.

IV. AUTHORIZING STATEMENT

I (we) hereby declare that the information and all statements to this application are true, complete, and accurate to the best of my (our) knowledge and that the project or activity complies with rules of the Future Fisheries Improvement Program.

Applicant Signature:

George Liknes

Date:

5/30/2012

Sponsor (if applicable):

***Highlighted boxes will automatically expand.**

**Mail To: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Habitat Protection Bureau
PO Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701**

Incomplete or late applications will be returned to applicant.

Applications may be rejected if this form is modified.

*****Applications may be submitted at anytime, but must be received by the Future Fisheries Program office in Helena before December 1 and June 1 of each year to be considered for the subsequent funding period.*****

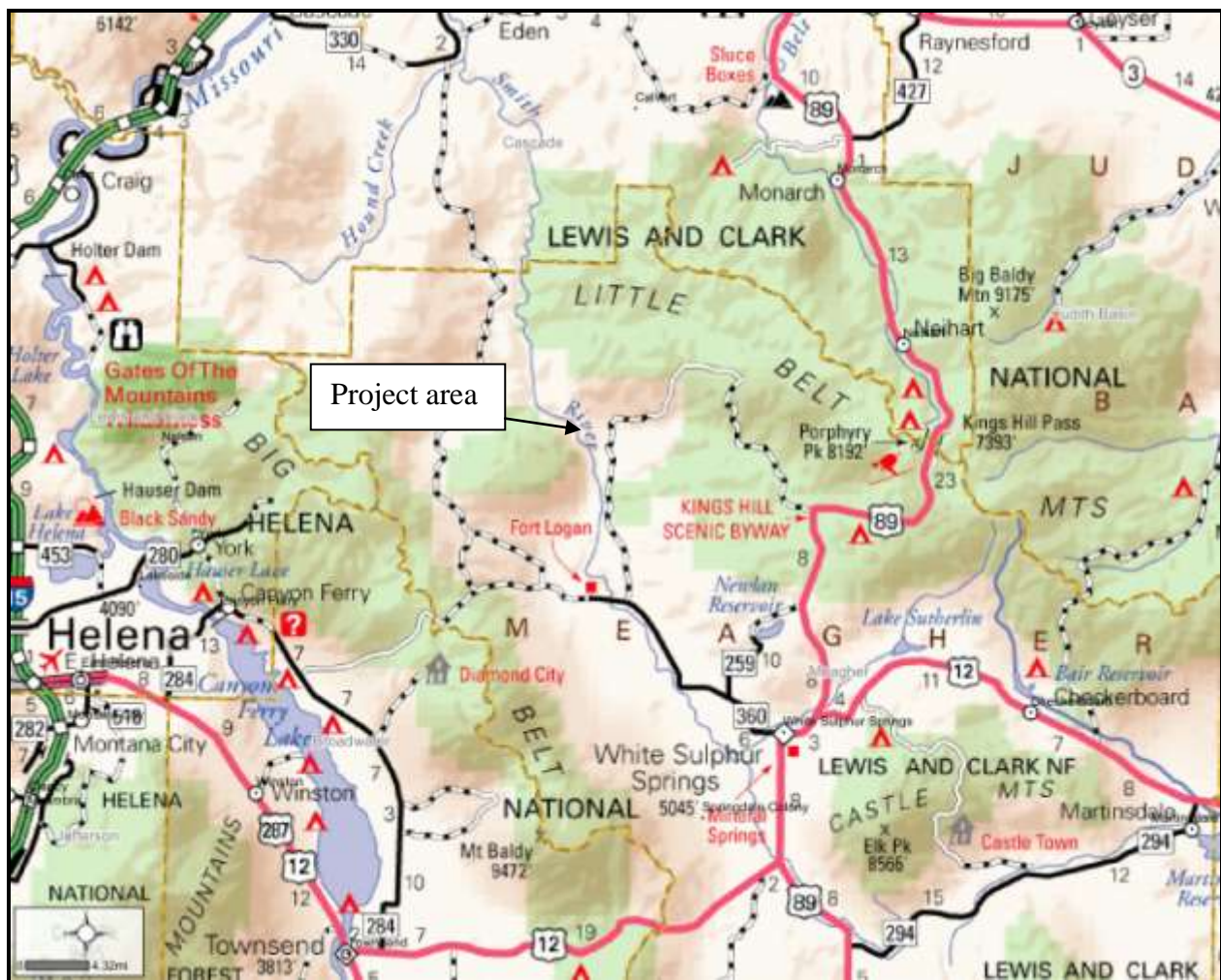


Figure 1. Rocking C's Ranch riparian fencing project site, Smith River, Montana.



Figure 2. Spring Creek hay field and "L" hay field proposed riparian fence (red), Rocking C's Ranch, Smith River, Montana.



Figure 3. Pond hay field and West Pasture hay field proposed riparian fence (red), Rocking C's Ranch, Smith River, Montana.



Figure 4. Cruz pasture proposed riparian fences (red), Rocking C's Ranch.



Figure 5. Camp Baker and lower Sheep Creek pasture proposed riparian fences (red), Rocking C's Ranch.



Figure 6. Upper Sheep Creek pasture and proposed riparian fences (red), Rocking C's Ranch.

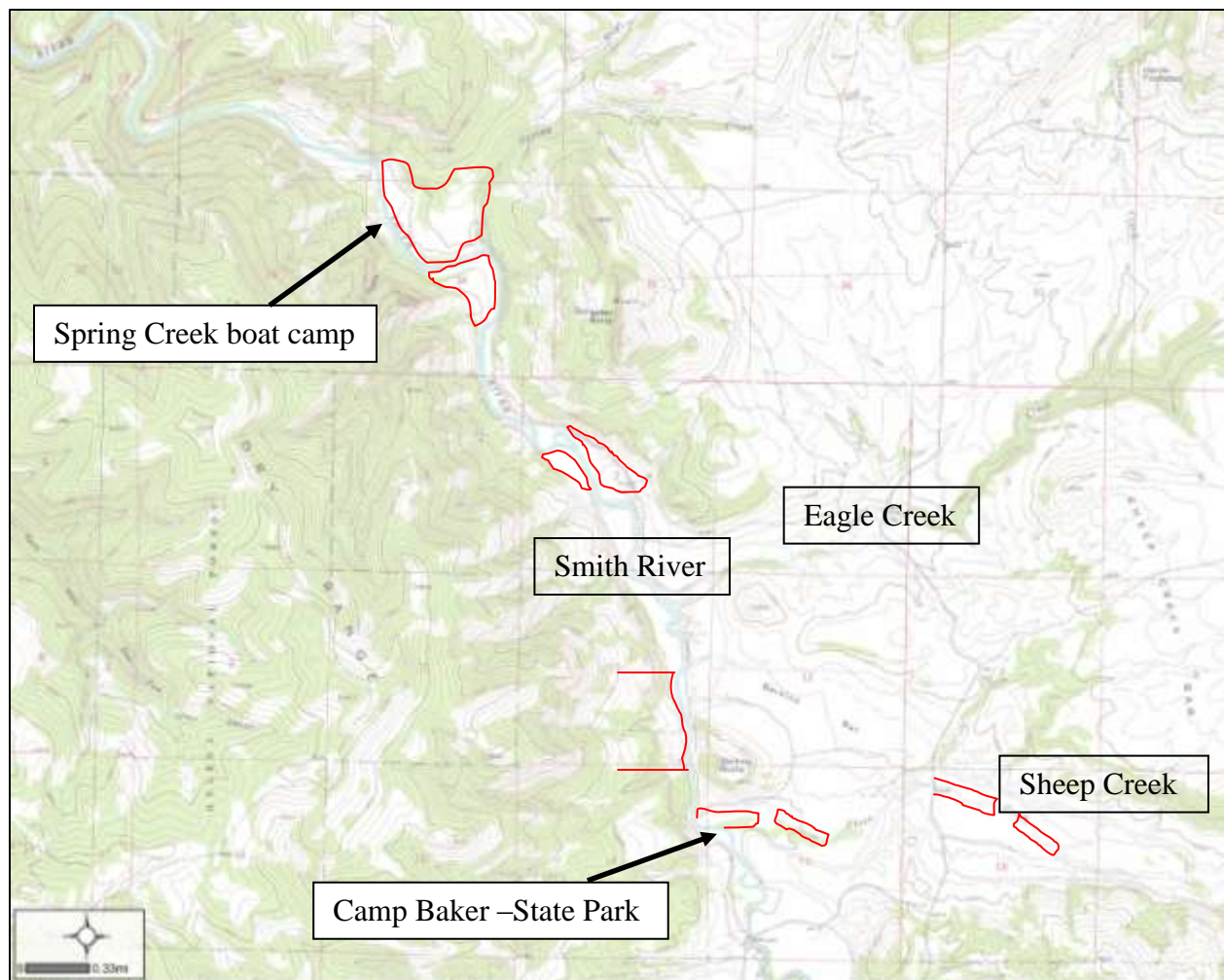


Figure 7. Expanded area showing proposed pasture/riparian fences (red) relative to Camp Baker State Park and Spring Creek boater camp site. Smith River, Montana.

References

- Grisak, G., A. Strainer and B. Tribby. 2012. Rainbow trout and brown trout movements between the Missouri River, Sun River and Smith River, Montana. PPL-Montana MOTAC projects 021-08, 771-09, 771-10, 771-11. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Great Falls. 21 pages.
- Grisak G. 2012. An Evaluation of Trout Movements in the Upper Smith River Basin. *final report to Canyon Ranch, Pat Barnes Missouri River Chapter of Trout Unlimited and Missouri River Flyfishers*. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Great Falls. 18 pages.
- Maas. C. 2012. Smith River State Park and river corridor visitor use & statistics monitoring report 2011. Montana State Parks, Great Falls.